

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of the application are respectfully requested in view of the remarks herewith.

I. STATUS OF THE CLAIMS AND FORMAL MATTERS

Claims 1-4, 9, 10, 14-16 and 19 are currently pending. Claims 1, 14-16 and 19 are independent. Claim 9 has been indicated as allowable.

II. REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claim 1-4, 10, 14-16 and 19 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,418,546 to Nakagakiuchi et al. (hereinafter, merely “Nakagakiuchi”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,517,242 to Yamada et al. (hereinafter, merely “Yamada”) and further in view of U.S. Pre-grant Publication 2001/003078 to Ide et al. (hereinafter, merely “Ide”).

III. RESPONSE TO REJECTIONS

Applicants submit that Ide is not prior art to the present invention. Indeed, Ide has a filing date of March 26, 2001, which is after the filing date of Applicants’ priority application JAPAN 2000-112345 filed April 13, 2000. Applicants submit herewith a Certified English Translation of Japan 2000-112345 showing that the pending claims of the present application are supported and enabled by the priority document.

Therefore, Applicants submit that the rejection based on Ide is improper and should be withdrawn. Applicants submit that the pending claims are patentable and request early allowance of the application.

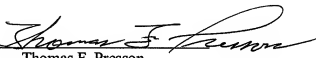
CONCLUSION

Please charge any additional fees that may be needed, and credit any overpayment, to our Deposit Account No. 50-0320.

In view of the foregoing remarks, it is believed that all of the claims in this application are patentable and Applicants respectfully request early passage to issue of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,

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